



**Welcome
to
Woodborough School
Academy Schools Meeting**

9th June 2016



What is this meeting about?

- To give parents an opportunity to find out more about the national agenda and how this impacts on Woodborough School
- To give parents an opportunity to ask questions.
- To enable parents to have an opportunity to share their comments to inform governors' planning.



Definition

- Academy Schools are independent from the Local Education Authority and funded directly by The Department of Education.
- The day-to-day running of the school is with the head teacher, but overseen by an individual charitable body called an academy trust.
- "Multi-Academy Trusts" (or MATs) are a number of schools held together under one trust. Academies used to be able to exist on their own but Government now requires all academies to join a MAT.
- An Executive not unlike a company Board controls the MAT. They provide advice, support, expertise and a strategic overview. They also control the admissions process, funding and have increased freedoms to innovate.



Background

- Currently only 2,440 of 16,766 (15%) of primary schools have academy status while 2,075 (61%) of the 3,381 secondary schools in England and Wales are academies.
- The number of academies has increased dramatically and now embraces all types of schools. All schools, primary as well as secondary are able to convert to academy status.
- Ofsted inspect these academies and there are Regional Schools Commissioners who also oversee schools in their area.



Conversion Benefits

- The government argues academies drive up standards by putting more power in the hands of head teachers who can control pay, length of the school day and term times.
- They have more freedom to innovate and can opt out of the national curriculum.



Current Position

- The recent academy policy that required all schools to convert by 2020 or be committed to converting by 2022 has been withdrawn. Education Secretary Nicky Morgan now states that the government is still committed to every school becoming an academy, but “it is not necessary to bring legislation to bring about blanket conversion of all schools to achieve this goal”.
- We also understand that as part of the change in Policy the Government will offer concessions to small rural schools to incentivise them and protect their funding. The details of this have yet to be released.



How this affects Woodborough?

- In the latest national monthly figures, 227 schools submitted applications to convert to academies, the highest monthly figure since the programme began.
- If current trends continue, the status quo cannot remain and we will face diminishing levels of service from Wiltshire Education Authority. They have already stated that some services will be cut and the levels of provision will start to diminish.
- We also understand that many of the local Primary and Secondary schools are working together and have either created their own MAT's or are in the process of doing so.
- There is a risk that the longer the decision to join a MAT is delayed the fewer options will be open to us.



Woodborough's Current Position

- Over the last eighteen months, Woodborough's Governing Body has been consulting with other schools and academies and there have been a series of meetings and presentations.
- The aim being to learn more and gather information so we can make the best decision for our great Primary school.
- At this stage, the governors are resolved that Woodborough should become an academy if it is in the strategic interest of the school. The MAT it is likely to be a local collective rather than a national or regional group.



Possible Options

White Horse Swindon

After initial discussions this MAT has not been pursued further. They are a large, existing MAT geographically centred in Swindon. They have a distinct culture and fixed ethos that could be considered as more urban than Woodborough. We would be able to join the MAT but it would be a homogenous model.



Possible Options

Excalibur, Marlborough

Initial meeting followed up by invitation to present at Governors on 24th March. Invitation accepted and then declined citing numbers of schools currently active in joining the MAT and also issues over our VA status. Meeting between Excalibur and Diocese 12th April, outcome unknown at present. Large, existing MAT that we would join but presents similar issues to White Horse.



Possible Options

Diocese

Information sessions attended by governors. Concerns have been raised over the location and quality of the other schools and if they offer a natural fit for Woodborough. This MAT is however likely to afford Woodborough significant freedoms and flexibility.



Possible Options

Lavington

The school is in the process of setting up a MAT with the following

- All Cannings School
- Chirton School
- Bishops Cannings School
- Dauntsey's Aided Primary School, West Lavington
- Nursted School, Devizes
- Downlands School, Devizes
- Lavington School



Possible Options

Lavington

They are at the early stages of forming a MAT that will be called The Sarsen Trust. A Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the process and encapsulates their objectives is ready for signature for schools that want to join.

The MAT is based on a collaborative approach with no one defined lead school.

Timing is important. At this stage Woodborough will have influence and possibly be able to adapt the Trust to ensure it met Woodborough's aims. If we join once the trust is formed that opportunity will be missed and we will be faced with an agreed set of documents.



Possible Options

Lavington

The trust has also overcome the VA issue as the Diocese appropriately represented at Member level.

The trust would also have no direct link to admissions unlike Excalibur. However Lavington is a rural feeder school so those parents wishing to join from Woodborough are likely to be accepted.



Possible Options

Pewsey Primary

Initial meetings have taken place and presentation by Peter McGuigan at full governors. VA status possibly an issue. They are keen to meet us again.



The Governors priorities in addressing this issue

- To maintain our Church of England Status, values and beliefs
- To strive for progress but with integrity and care
- To retain our individuality and cultural identity as Woodborough Church of England Primary School
- To maintain our strong links with the local community and for that to be reflected both ways within that community and our school.
- Join or create a successful and thriving MAT that places Woodborough's funding on a sustainable future.



Woodborough's Future

- The process is not straightforward and will require the negotiation and agreement of a suite of legal documents. We would also wish to consult with staff and parents to ensure any changes were supported by the majority of stakeholders.
- The Governors will continue their dialogue with local schools. If we decide to convert this will be based on the best match for the school. If so a preferred partner will be identified in the next few months.
- In the interim we will sign the Memorandum of Understanding for the Sarsen Trust as this does not prejudice our position and keeps our options open.



Woodborough's Future

- Please be assured that the Governors view this as the most important issue currently facing the school and will do all they can to ensure the best outcome for the pupils and future of the school.
- If we were to identify a suitable MAT it is likely to take up to a year before the school converts.
- We very much hope to provide you with further information soon and if you have any immediate questions please contact the Governing Body via the school.



Questions

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